[*Method and apparatus to regulate use of freely exchanged files and streams*]

Abstract of Disclosure

A method and apparatus is provided for regulating the use of freely distributed files and streams comprising the installation of one or more local software nodes associated with one or more encrypted credit objects and one or more encrypted policy objects which are used to regulate use of files and streams according to credit policies. This method and apparatus provides the ability to implement a credit policy. Further, this credit policy can be implemented or modified without requiring a new version of the associated product. This present invention also provides the ability to securely create and modify encrypted credit objects, while still permitting the free exchange and transfer of files and streams.

Figures